

# ECO-EXTREMISTS



## REFLECTIONS

N° 2

In this second issue, we bring an old reflection by Abe Cabrera, evidencing already by those days the clear differences between US and the rest, those groups and characters with more progressive inclinations although they deny it, we are talking, of course, about the anarcho-primitivists and co.

At the same time, we bring a large part of the important reflections of Chahta-Ima, an eco-extremist theorist, pioneer in that field, who with his sharpened critics and thoughts was cutting the root of the rotteness that the modern ideologies are. We mention that the writings by Chahta-Ima have been invaluable for some of the individualists who are doing this work and we highlight them with great appreciation and pride.

And finally, an extract from the text “The Calusa, a savage kingdom?”, Whose teachings are too important to be forgotten.

We are very thankful for the contributions from the accomplices in the Animus Delendi blog, whom have helped us with the English translations for some of the texts on the first notebook, in this the number two as well and in the next ones which are still on preparations. The complicity between individualists brings the possibility to carry on with every editorial effort we have in mind, thus it allows us to move forward within the Tendency polishing are approaches, exchanging thoughts and posing new questions.

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# Primitivism without Catastrophe

Every good idea needs a selling point. The selling point of the all-encompassing ideology that can go by any name from “anarcho-primitivism” to “anti-civilization thinking” is that modern techno-industrial civilization is destroying the human race, and if we want to stop this destruction, we have to destroy civilization. It’s a matter of self-preservation. We must renounce technology, science, modern medicine, etc. in order to save ourselves. How do we know this? Well, technology, science, modern medicine, etc. tell us so. I am likely not the first one who has noticed the inconsistency in this perspective, but perhaps I am one of the first to say something about it.

“Anti-civilization thought” (for lack of a better term) has a “knowledge problem.” That is, it seeks to criticize the totality from the view of the totality. It seeks to dismantle the tools that have built everything that it despises using the same tools. This culminates in the idea of “catastrophe”: the cathartic collapse of its enemy and a chance for the restoration of a just order. For someone with a hammer, everything appears to be a nail, and for someone with an apocalyptic narrative, everything leads to the end of the world. Indeed, some could say that catastrophe is to the primitivist what the Resurrection of Jesus was to St. Paul: the *sine qua non* outside of which the message cannot not exist. If humanity is not damned via technology, if all life on earth is not endangered by the upstart selfish ape from Africa, then what are we doing here? We might as well just go home and enjoy the flat screen TVs and air conditioning.

Things of course aren’t really that simple. But the first question should be, “Are we doomed?” A few books have come out recently that seek to answer the question in the negative, even though they take the Cassandra-like science of climate change and resource depletion very seriously. Ronald Bailey’s *The End of Doom: Environmental Renewal in the Twenty-first Century* is one of the stronger contributions to this eco-modernist genre. Though we will not have the time to review it all here, we can at least go over the strongest point in his book (at least from my perspective): the analysis of the ecological idea that “doing nothing” is better than “doing something.”

This concept is undoubtedly a trope in environmentalist discourse. Nature has been doing any given thing for millions of years, and thus, so the story goes, nature knows best. Bailey calls this, “the precautionary principle,” best formulated by the phrase after which he names his third chapter, “Never Try Anything the First Time.” Anything new is guilty until proven innocent, the burden of proof lies with the novel thing to demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that it won’t create more problems than it is trying to solve. It becomes evident that those who cling to the precautionary principle are paralyzed from performing any action because they don’t have complete metaphysical certainty concerning how a technological development will pan out. (Think here, for example, of genetically modified foods and the fierce debate around them.) Those who suffer because of this hesitation, Bailey argues, do not have the luxury of doubt: they need the cancer drug, cheap food, and other benefits that technological advancement can provide. As Bailey states:

Unfortunately, the precautionary principle sounds sensible to many people, especially those who live in societies already replete with technology. These people have their centrally heated house in the woods; they already enjoy the freedom from want, disease, and ignorance that technology can provide. They may think they can afford the luxury of ultimate precaution. But there are billions of people who still yearn to have their lives transformed. For them, the precautionary principle is a warrant for continued poverty, not safety. (93-94)

So here a knowledge problem is turned around and then turned around again. The anti-civilization neo-Luddite thinker has studied enough concerning techno-industrial society to know that it is a lost cause. He knows this through use of the tools that techno-industrial society has given him. He knows that there are no technological fixes for the quagmire that modern society has created. Yet, the eco-modernist like Bailey then turns the tables around and shows how this pessimism is based on an optimistic view of human knowledge supported by a technological infrastructure that enables study and reflection. If we don’t really know, and know that we don’t really know, aren’t we under obligation to try? Isn’t such ignorance an opportunity and not a roadblock? Is this not what the Enlightenment and the Scientific Revolution were all about?

In much of the rest of the book, Bailey shows time and again, on issues ranging from population to peak oil, to the supposed spread of cancer due to use of industrial products, that the Cassandras have been wrong, and very wrong, up to this point. Bailey concludes from this that homo sapiens is a crafty and cunning animal, able to pull victory out of the jaws of defeat time and again. Bailey has little doubt we will continue to do so, even if he concedes that some things, such as climate change, do appear to be real problems facing the entire human race.

Ironically, accepting Bailey’s premises might be the most “primitivist” position of all. If we are ultimately animals who are helpless to save ourselves unless we get rid of the instruments of our own seemingly absolute power, how is it that we can totally damn ourselves to non-existence? Or rather, if we are too dumb to save ourselves, we may be too dumb to kill ourselves off. There is of course the principle of entropy, and the intuition that it is easier to break something than it is to fix it. But that analogy doesn’t really hold here, as we are talking about billions of individual animals all over the globe who have proven themselves to be resilient to the point of crowding everything else out.

So which one is it then? Are we saved or are we damned? Is catastrophe an inescapable reality or a masochistic wish? The long and the short of it is: we don’t know. And those who pretend to know are perhaps clinging to an odd bulwark of certainty in

damnation or optimism wherein Nassim Nicholas Taleb's black swans never occur. The future cannot be totally bleak, nor can we rest assured that disaster won't happen just because it hasn't happened yet. All that we have is the present.

So we return to the title: Can there be a primitivism without catastrophe? What if this society can work things out just fine? Do we all get to go home then? Do we give this techno-industrial capitalist order a pass, and at least acknowledge that, if we can't be in the society that we want, we should love the society that we are in? After all, we're all humans, we all share the same souls and bodies, the same intellect and feelings. We might as well work to save everyone, and who cares how we do it? Dreams of going back to an idealized hunter-gatherer simpler life become less appealing by the day.

Into this impasse, we add the thoughts from a recent interview with members of the Mexican eco-extremist tendency:

The main difference between what Kaczynski and his acolytes propose and our own position is rather simple: we don't wait for a "Great World Crisis" to start attacking the physical and moral structures of the techno-industrial system. We attack now because the future is uncertain. You can't create a strategy based on assumptions, thinking that all will go according to plan and with assured victory. We stopped believing in that once we grasped the enormity of the system itself, its components and its vast reach on this planet and even outside of it. If civilization collapses tomorrow, or within 30 to 50 years, we'll know that we waged a necessary war against it from our own individuality... We don't know if there will be a global collapse of the system one day. The experts say that there will be, but we cannot know for certain. It could be the case and nature will rise from the ruins. But it could be that the system is always one step ahead of things, and could become self-sufficient and repair itself with ease. As we said, we don't know the future. We would like to, but the reality is otherwise.



With the eco-extremists, then, we can find our way out of the flawed position of "a better future by returning to the past." Here, we would say that the future is our enemy. Every single proposed way out, whether it be from Bailey's libertarian assurances or leftist techno-progressive schemes, is something that we refuse right out of the gate. We don't want to cooperate, we reject saving the world. We refuse to offer up our lives or the lives of others for a better tomorrow. This is always promised, but it never arrives. And here, the knowledge problem enters again: it never arrives because no one can possibly deliver it. Things only "get better all of the time" because we have domesticated ourselves into thinking that the carrot is the goal and that we are getting closer, and the stick isn't really there even when it strikes us right on the nose. Such is the essence of civilization, the foggy mythical past, and the constantly-deferred future.

Catastrophe is the catharsis that ends the cycle of suffering. But like the Buddhist version, it is also elusive and never happens in this life. Indeed, the real problem with "anti-civilization thought," especially in its anarcho-primitivist form, is that it does not know what it wants, because what it wants is shaped by what it hates. It does not even know nature, really, because it refuses to acknowledge that humans cannot know it with any certainty, and thus constructs nature as an idol embodying all of its ambivalent desires. The idea of defending nature itself makes one aware that our knowledge of nature, especially the peculiarly North American concept of "pristine nature" is ill-founded. David George Haskell describes the plight of forest vegetation in the face of the recent resurgence of the deer population in his book, *The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature*:

Humans have eliminated some predators but have lately added three new deer-slaying creatures: domestic dogs, immigrant coyotes invading from the west, and automobile fenders. The first two are effective predators of fawns; the latter is the main suburban killer of adults. We face an impossible equation. On the one hand, we have the loss of tens of species of herbivores; on the other we have the replacement of one predator by another. What level of browse is normal, acceptable, or natural in our forests? These are challenging questions, but it is certain that the lush forest vegetation that grew in the twentieth century was unusually underbrowsed.

A forest without large herbivores is an orchestra without violins. We have grown accustomed to incomplete symphonies, and we balk when the violins' incessant tones return and push against more familiar instruments. This backlash against the herbivores' return has no good historical foundation. We may need to take a longer view, listen to the whole symphony, and celebrate the partnership between animal and microbe that has been tearing at saplings for millions of years. Good-bye shrubbery; hello ticks. Welcome back to the Pleistocene. (33-34)

So we must face the fact that there may be no "catastrophe," and if there is, it won't have the purifying effect that we expect. The definition of modern capitalism is crisis, and the good businessman makes crisis into an opportunity. Does that mean we don't fight? That we lay down our arms defeated by quietism and agnosticism? Not necessarily, but it does mean we should define better

why we oppose the present society even if it has the potential to last a million years, and even if it does, in some respects, make our lives “better.” Or at the very least, we should define why we oppose it, and why we do not think that it can follow through with any of its promises to bring all human animals out of misery.

First, let us start with nature. We cannot oppose catastrophe as a concept without nuance precisely because nature is a catastrophe, long-term. This is because nature is change, it is change that dwarfs human experience even at its most scientific and abstract. Modern humans have the pervasive problem of conceiving of their ideas as being consubstantial with reality, often when they have no reason to do so. They master incomprehensible things like time, space, matter, light, etc. in the abstract and thus think there is nothing more to them in the concrete, though they haven’t left the comfort of their chair or their space in front of the blackboard. Nature is catastrophe because nature disrupts, it breaks apart, it destroys all and births again: from the most distant stars to the cells of our body. Anti-civilization adherents have a hard time accepting that in the concrete, though they may mouth platitudes about it in the abstract. To that one can only say, “Physician, heal thyself!”

What is nature in relation to us, then? How do we get around the idea, often repeated by critics, that primitivists “reify nature.” Here, I will offer a crypto-Hegelian trope. Many “primitivists” (again, for lack of a better term) think of nature as being outside of us, and that it offers us our existence as a passive gift, and the real problem is that we have forgotten the freely-given aspect of this gift (recall here the Christian concept of grace). Just as man cannot earn salvation from Calvin’s God, so man is impotent to create his means of life without the assent of nature. Of course, this is an absurd formulation. Nature, or if we want to use James Lovelock’s much-maligned term, Gaia, is the product of billions of living things throughout the eons working together and sustaining each other: it is the act of living things. They are both formed by it and form it, in an elaborate mesh going from the smallest microorganism to vast complex ecosystems to the biosphere itself. We must keep that in mind whenever we look at “pristine nature.” As Haskell says elsewhere in his book cited above, nature is not a meditation room, and it is no Eden where fruit is picked effortlessly off the tree. There is struggle and strife, just as there is cooperation and mercy. The fact that it has persisted this long is evidence of that.

The sin of domesticated man is not resisting his passive human nature, as some primitivists would imply. It’s thinking that he is independent of nature itself, that he can go it alone, that he can firmly master it and leave nothing to the blissful shade of mystery. This is modern domesticated man, cut-off, ruthless, and self-absorbed. It is not what he does, but what he does too well, or so he thinks, that is the problem. That is why there is no “solution.” There is no human abstraction that absorbs the whole problem and makes it digestible. The world where there are solutions is a world that shouldn’t exist, or rather, the world that creates problems in the first place. Catastrophe as modern man understands it (final, devastating, purifying) is the necessary myth hanging over Utopia like the sword of Damocles. Some of us prefer falling swords to imaginary paradise.

The eco-extremist solution is thus brutal and pessimistic. There is no future, there is no new community. There is no “hope.” We state that not with Gothic glee, but with relief, like having a burden taken off of our shoulders. Human beings are meant to miss the mark, we are meant to fail more than we succeed. But in that, we form a part of a whole, we leave others behind us to win and lose, and to fight another day. Our ambition has no end, because it never achieves victory. And we look at past extinct societies that accepted their limitations (or so we think, for we cannot possibly know) with admiration; an admiration that knows that, if they weren’t “perfect,” it’s because there is something wrong with our domesticated expectations, and nothing truly wrong with them. All we can expect is to fight back and burn out in this existence where the part pretends that it can swallow the whole. And that is indeed what primitivism without catastrophe, without a closed narrative, without a “happy ending,” looks like: the contentment of the eye and all of the other senses in the face of what we know to be nature, even if we don’t understand it, even if it seems mutilated and incomprehensible in the here and now. It is not something that we make (though we have a part in it) nor is it something we control (though we try our best). But mixed in the heart and the mind of man, it is truly something marvelous to behold: this whole, the vast field of stars, the song of the bird, the slithering slug, the new day, decay, death, life... or to end with the greater poetic voice of Robinson Jeffers:

*To know that great civilizations have broken down into violence,  
and their tyrants come, many times before.*

*When open violence appears, to avoid it with honor or choose  
the least ugly faction; these evils are essential.*

*To keep one’s own integrity, be merciful and uncorrupted  
and not wish for evil; and not be duped*

*By dreams of universal justice or happiness. These dreams will  
not be fulfilled.*

*To know this, and know that however ugly the parts appear  
the whole remains beautiful. A severed hand*

*Is an ugly thing and man dissevered from the earth and stars  
and his history... for contemplation or in fact...*

*Often appears atrociously ugly. Integrity is wholeness,  
the greatest beauty is*

*Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty  
of the universe. Love that, not man*

*Apart from that, or else you will share man's pitiful confusions,  
or drown in despair when his days darken.* [2]

#### Notes

[1] See “Politically Incorrect: An Interview with Wild Reaction” (<http://anarchistnews.org/content/politically-incorrect-interview-wild-reaction>)

[2] Robinson Jeffers, “The Answer,” in *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Tim Hunt (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

#### Abe Cabrera



# “Saving the World” as the Highest Form of Domestication

*“Each Apache decides for himself whether or not he fights. We are a free people. We do not force men to fight as the Mexicans do. Forced military service produces slaves, not warriors.”*

—“Grandfather,” quoted in, In the Days of Victorio: Recollections of a Warm Springs Apache, by Eve Ball and James Kaywaykla

The context of this quote is of interest as it is uttered in a meeting of Apache leaders concerning whether or not they should continue resistance against the invading white man or succumb to the powerful invading force. With hindsight, one could state that such a stance is foolish: had the Apache stood as a “united front” instead of the diverse bands that they had always been, they could have had a shot at victory, or so the reasoning goes.

Instead, their inability to adapt their social organization to new conditions led directly to their downfall. In the face of a society of interchangeable citizens constituting a massive unified Leviathan, the Apache continued to be the untame, indomitable people of before. And they paid the ultimate price for it: defeat, humiliation, exile, and in many cases, premature death.

But perhaps, even then, the ends do not justify the means. Or rather, the “ends” are really the “means” projected and amplified into a monstrous and logical conclusion. Even if the Apache chiefs had conscripted every warrior and forced them to fight, even if some of the warriors hadn’t run off and become scouts hunting their own people for the white army, even if they could have held off the U.S. Army for a few more years, they would not have done so as Apaches, or as the people that they always were. Here it would be something akin to, “in order to save the city, we had to destroy it.” Or better, in order to prevent the city from being planted in the land of the Apache, they had to become the city in civilized reasoning. And they knew what that meant: slavery in one form or another. They accepted the consequences of their refusal, even if they had second thoughts about it.

We can apply the lessons here to our own situation. Many “green anarchist” or “green post-leftist” groups like Deep Green Resistance and the like very much have a “militaristic” or “militant” attitude toward “dismantling” or “destroying” civilization. There are even “pro-Unabomber” groups in existence that dream of a “revolution” against “techno-industrial society.” But what if, as Grandfather says above, in their efforts to fight slavery, they are just making more slaves? Is this not the essence of the leftist / revolutionary project: one last “slavery,” one last “martyrdom” that will end all slaveries and martyrdoms? Just one more great big push and we will establish the place where there is neither sorrow, nor sighing, nor anymore pain. Leviathan has dreamed this dream before, a myriad of times now, and people have thrown themselves against the wheels of Progress in order to make it a reality. They are still dead, and we are nowhere closer to freedom.

Still, there are others, such as John Zerzan, who think that to “give up” defending the world that civilization has wrought is akin to nihilism and despair. “Hope,” so the reasoning goes, would be finding a way to “let everyone off easy,” of avoiding all the negative consequences of the end of a way of life that has been nothing but negative consequences for those who have opposed it (such as our Apaches here). The Requiem sung for a world built on the massive graveyard of other dead worlds must be a pastoral and peaceful one, so we are told, lest we succumb to revenge and hatred, lest we sin against the “Enlightenment” values that somehow escaped being fully domesticated, even when everything else is (*mirabile visu!*)

But what if this urge to save the world, this urge to “overthrow tyranny” no matter what the cost, this itch to “fight for a better world” is just another hamster wheel, another yoke to be put on us, to solve problems that we didn’t create, and to sacrifice ourselves for a better world which we will never see (funny how that works)? What if the genius of domesticated civilization has been to harness our hostility into making it better, commodifying our radicalism, and perpetuating civilized values in self-



proclaimed enemies like a virus in an unsuspecting host? Why not just keep our principles, like the defeated Apache did, and let the chips fall where they may? What if we just realize that, as animals, we don't know what the future will bring, the only resistance that we have is resistance in the now, and the cares of tomorrow will take care of themselves? Indeed, we simply have no power over tomorrow, just as we have no power to resurrect the past. If we did, we wouldn't be animals, and the revolutionist / leftist / technocrat would be right.

Mexican ecoextremists are embodying these ideas as in the following passage, which I have translated from a recent work of theirs:

*"We fully realize that we are civilized human beings. We have found ourselves within this system and we use the means that it provides us to express a tendency opposed to it, with all of its contradictions, knowing full well that we have long been contaminated by civilization. But even as the domesticated animals that we are, we still remember our instincts. We have lived more time as a species in caves than in cities. We are not totally alienated, which is why we attack. The distinguishing feature of RS in this conversation is that we say that there is no better tomorrow. There is no changing the world into a more just one. That can never exist within the bounds of the technological system that has encompassed the entire planet. All that we can expect is a decadent tomorrow, gray and turbulent. All that exists is the now, the present. That's why we are not betting on the "revolution" so hoped for in leftist circles. Even if that seems exaggerated, that's just how it is. Resistance against the technological system must be extremist in the here and now, not waiting for any changes in objective conditions. It should have no "long term goals." It should be carried out right now by individuals who take on the role of warriors under their own direction, accepting their own inconsistencies and contradictions. It should be suicidal. We don't aim to overthrow the system. We don't want followers. What we want is individualist war waged by various factions against the system that domesticates and subjugates us.*

*Our cry to Wild Nature will always be the same until our own violent extermination: "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come... and the time when thou shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." (Revelation 11:18)*

Perhaps the only truly free response, the only one that escapes the cycle of domestication, is one that states firmly that this world is not worth saving, that its days are numbered, and the sooner the evil falls, the better. Sometimes damnation in Christian eschatology is not merely a punishment, but is what is best for the soul saturated in iniquity. The world must fall, and nothing will likely replace it, nothing we can foresee anyway. The only real praxis, then, is one of rejection and not one of rebuilding: one of the heroic animal facing off against the civilized juggernaut of slavery and fear.

**By Chahta-Ima**



# What do we mean when we say, “nature”?

One of the red herrings that has come up of late among critics of eco-extremism is the idea that we worship a false idea of “Nature”. In their eyes, we are positing something vague, perhaps using wishful thinking, and trying to fit the round peg of reality into the square hole of our concepts. I am not here to give THE definition of what every eco-extremist means by “nature” or “Wild Nature”. I will only give my own idea of it. Again, anyone else is free to speak up, as I acknowledge that this is a difficult topic to address. At least if someone is stuck trying to define what they know to be the deepest being of themselves and the world, perhaps they can refer to this and find something useful. With that in mind:

A “natural” object in modern parlance usually indicates a thing that exists solely for itself. It is, simply put, and does not need any further purpose added onto it. If an archaeologist, for example, is hiking through a forest, he may see hundreds of trees and thousands of plants, but none of these interest him. If he sees a large stone with engravings on it, however, he will definitely pause and study it. While the forest may actually be the remnants of a forest garden or the product of thousands of years of cultivation or slash and burn horticulture, the archaeologist has no means of knowing this. But he like even the amateur knows what is “natural” and what isn’t, what is directly made by the hand of man and what is not.

Similarly, in our own lives, if we see a remote control in a room that we have never been in before, we ask what machine it might control: what is it for? If we see a potted plant, no such question arises. If we are in our backyard and we spot a deer or raccoon, we don’t ask, “But what is it for?” We can, but being undomesticated, it’s not as if they will reform their purpose according to the ideas that we have of them. Nature, the wild, wilderness, the animal etc. is for itself.

Thus, when we meet a person, we will usually ask the question, “So, what do you do?” Being domesticated, we are like cattle in that our own existence is predicated on what we do for others and not for ourselves. I am not an accountant for myself; it’s not inherently part of my nature. Crunching numbers or reading up on tax code does me no direct benefit, it’s not something I would naturally do with little prompting and meager effort. The same is the case of a building: many people (if not most) can perhaps get a sense of awe from looking at an impressive building, and they may even mistake it for a mysterium tremendum et fascinans. However, the reason why many like to stare at a forest or be surrounded by greenery is perhaps because they want to be reminded that there are things that exist for themselves and not for others. The same is true with children, as children, at least while very young, are not “useful”.

Then there is the idea of “play”. Children are defined by their love of play: activity that has no benefit other than the joy of doing it. Some say hunter-gatherers’ activity deeply resembles play, in that the division of labor is only a matter of degree. Grown men hunt, and small boys imitate hunting, then they catch smaller game. And of course girls imitate and participate in gathering and other activities of manufacture. All the same, the benefits of any activity are usually immediate and obvious.

Of course, there are those who are frustrated by both children and nature, but this is mainly because they will not abide by the designs that people have preconceived for things in their heads. I can only say that, for me, being in nature is transformative since I get to be with things that need no other purpose than themselves. They just are.

Some would say that all human experience is mediated through human cognition and agency, but in saying this in the context of modern people, they are missing a crucial distinction. “Wilderness” as an untouched and untouchable space of greenery is perhaps a recent concept. Even “primitive” hunter-gatherers manipulated and “harvested” from their environments in very complex ways. They would have walked through a forest or other landscape and would not have seen merely a scene of admiration or meditation, like a painting, but a lively “factory” that made the means by which they lived, with their “help”, though they may have not perceived it that way. On the other hand, it is not accurate to state that modern people do the exact same thing when they clear-cut a forest, blow up a mountain looking for coal, or dump industrial waste in a river.

Here I will diverge from the received ideas of “anti-civilization” or anarcho-primitivist discourse and state that this is not a matter of living “in harmony” with or being subject to wilderness, whatever that means. It is not an innate software program that we either follow to the letter or don’t, to our own peril. The issue, as I have stated previously, is one of scale and capability. If “primitive” peoples could have created plastic or bulldozers or chainsaws, they may have done so, though the results may not have been the same as the ones we see today. Our modern world is not a teleological inevitability. It may cater to certain desires of that elusive thing called, “human nature”, but people lived tens of thousands of years, perhaps longer, without any of our gadgets or systems of governance. Comparatively speaking, domestication, agriculture, urban life, etc. are a sort of “black swan” that has been wildly successful (pun intended) at conquering all that is alien to them, but that doesn’t mean that it could not have been otherwise. In most places and circumstances with homo sapiens, it hasn’t. Civilization has the pretense of having mastered time in the abstract, but in the concrete, it has only existed for a minuscule amount of time, and that time may be running out.

Thus, nature. We think that because we manipulate nature, we “create” and “define” it. That presumes that we can wrap our head around it and do with it as we will. Those who oppose a hard line between nature and human cognition of matter often don’t oppose it when it comes to the line between the human mind and the objects that it contemplates and seeks to alter. In that, human

cognition / consciousness is sovereign, masculine, special, and near godly. The human mind is thus “of another order”, and thus the strict line between nature and mind is maintained. Indeed, when the mind looks at nature, all it is really doing is looking at itself looking at... something. It knows not what, nor can it ever. All things are for it, even the things that it can’t control, even the things it cannot possibly perceive (?)

So in my own idea of nature, I have found that I am making a smaller leap of faith to posit that, yes indeed, there is something out there, beyond me, beyond my perception or cognition. I am not a closed system or a self-sustaining one: I am not the origin of existence. Otherwise, what would be the result of positing the potential omniscience of human thought; the absolute mediation of human cognition in everything; the idea that all things are for us, and we are ultimately all things? For me, that smacks too much of a God complex, as in the monotheistic sky god carried on by other means, whether we call it science, or philosophy, or solipsism, or the Future, or whatever. These all perform the same function.

Nature exists because the human mind is weak and limited. It is mortal, it is made of flesh, and ultimately this is its limit, even if we can’t see it. It’s playing a game with the rest of existence, and it will lose. The existence of nature is the limit of thought. It is the fact that all things are not for us, our thoughts do not make things: the things are there for the taking, and would be there without our intervention. In other words, we are not gods, we are not spirits, precisely because those things don’t exist as we have come to understand them. Our thought does not and cannot comprehend everything, which is why it is so miserably unreliable.

There are things that exist purely for themselves. A child knows this. A simpleton may even know it. It takes the “wise” of the “World” (a Biblical term) to deny it. There are things in this world that we will never dominate. We may be able to land our technological garbage on the moon, yet we cannot feed every child who is hungry, or prevent our shuddering before the shadow of death. This is why humanity will be supplanted, and nature will abide.

Eco-extremism is, in my opinion, the trust in the order that nature itself has wrought, along with the “weak” human societies that have been formed by it. To “trust” in nature is not a leap of faith, on the contrary. Civilization is a cult that demands faith, it demands one’s obedience to the idea that the “common good” is the highest good of all. It is an act of faith to believe that sacrificing yourself and the wild nature of today will somehow have benefits for all tomorrow. We prefer the good right in front of us, in the trees, the rivers, the oceans, the blue sky, the mountains, and our own undomesticated desires; and not a concocted “good” of civilization that seeks the slavery and destruction of all things for itself. We detest that, we attack it, and we give it no quarter. When we mention, “Wild Nature,” we are not being vague: we are referring to something right in front of your nose. That you do not see it is your problem, not ours.

**-Chahta-Ima**

**Nanih Waiya**

**Hash Bihi (May) 2016**



# Politically Incorrect Savages

*Steve Sheldon told me about a woman giving birth alone on a beach. Something went wrong. A breech birth. The woman was in agony. ‘Help me, please! The baby will not come,’ she cried out. The Pirahas sat passively, some looking tense, some talking normally. ‘I’m dying! This hurts. The baby will not come!’ she screamed. No one answered. It was late afternoon. Steve started toward her. ‘No, she doesn’t want you. She wants her parents,’ he was told, the implication clearly being that he was not to go to her. But her parents were not around and no one else was going to her aid. The evening came and her cries came regularly, but even more weakly. Finally, they stopped. In the morning Steve learned that she and the baby had died on the beach, unassisted. Steve recorded the story about this incident, repeated here. The text... recounts [the] tragic incident that provides insight into Piraha culture. In particular it tells us that the Piraha let a young woman die, alone and without help, because of their belief that people must be strong and get through difficulties on their own.*

-Daniel Everett, Don't Sleep, There are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle pg. 90-91

*One curious effect was observed which gave rise to much complaint on the part of the native male population. As a result of the wholesale association of the women with white men a spontaneous feminist movement developed. Aboriginal, the woman was not only physically, but economically and spiritually, subservient to the man. The squaw performed most of the hard manual labor associated with village life while her husband and father loafed away their time. She was obliged to obey every command and whim of her lord and master. To do otherwise was to invite stern and inevitable retribution. With the influx of thousands of white men, unmarried and on the hunt for females, the situation altered. She could confront the Indian male with the choice of better treatment or loss of his spouse to some white suitor. Moreover, the Indian woman was undoubtedly influenced profoundly by the enviable position which her sex occupied in the newly established white communities. Although no contemporary sociologist gave the matter attention, we get inklings of a pretty formidable feminine revolt. The agent at the Fresno Indian Farm reported:*

“Though the men are, or once were, absolute masters of the women, many of them at this time... have found shelter among the whites, and are consequently independent of the men.” A statement also appeared at about the same period to the effect that “white men have taken the Indians’ wives from their lodges and taught them to despise the lazy creatures who used to make them slaves.” If this state of mind was characteristic of a large body of female opinion, it is easy to see how, although no vast social upheaval was involved, the change could act as an irritant and thereby serve as another factor in the disruption of aboriginal family life.

“The American Invasion, 1848-1870” pgs. 81-82 in Cook, Sherburne F. The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

*The Jarawas, who number about 400 and whom one geneticist described as “arguably the most enigmatic people on our planet,” are believed to have migrated from Africa around 50,000 years ago. They are very dark-skinned, small in stature and until 1998 lived in complete cultural isolation, shooting outsiders with steel-tipped arrows if they came too near...*

It is no secret that the tribe has, in the past, carried out ritual killings of infants born to widows or — much rarer — fathered by outsiders. Dr. Ratan Chandra Kar, a government physician who wrote a memoir about his work with the Jarawas, described a tradition in which newborn babies were breast-fed by each of the tribe’s lactating women before being strangled by one of the tribal elders, so as to maintain “the so-called purity and sanctity of the society.”

-“Baby’s Killing Tests India’s Protection of an Aboriginal Culture,” New York Times, March 13, 2016

*One evening Debe walked right into Gau’s camp and without saying a word shot three arrows into Gau, one in the left shoulder, one in the forehead, and a third one in the chest. Gau’s people made no move to protect him. After three arrows were shot, Gau still sat facing the attacker. The Debe raised his spear as if to stab him. But Gau said, “You have hit me three times. Isn’t it enough to kill me, that you want to stab me too?” When Gau tried to dodge away from the spear, Gau’s people came forward to disarm Debe of his spear. Having been so badly wounded, Gau died quickly.*

-Richard Lee, The Dobe !Kung, cited in Ultrasociety: How 10,000 Years of War Made Humans the Greatest Cooperators on Earth, pg. 104

For me, all of these quotes above remind me of a seemingly insignificant quote that appeared toward the end of the polemic, “Ya se habían tardado,” which reads:

*Before this commentary, [Reacción Salvaje – RS] states that, if [Destroy the Prisons] considers himself an expert on communities, we would hope that he would be aware that for hundreds of years the mountain peoples of Mexico have been accustomed to forms of life that are frowned upon by citizens who adhere to sick Western culture. Some of their practices are counted as “brutal” such as, for example, trading a woman for a cow or a few pigs. For natives that’s common, it’s their custom, their modus vivendi and thus normal. But for Western moralists (including anarchists) it is something shameful, they get indignant and cry out to heaven when they hear people speak of these things. And of course, self-proclaimed anarchist feminists are the most scandalized by this. RS however doesn’t see any of this in a bad light. RS respects the development and customs of these communities, because it’s not*

our business to change them. We emphasize that we are not misogynists, but we really don't oppose these native attitudes. This is how we think in the end even if the anarchists are enraged that we talk like this.

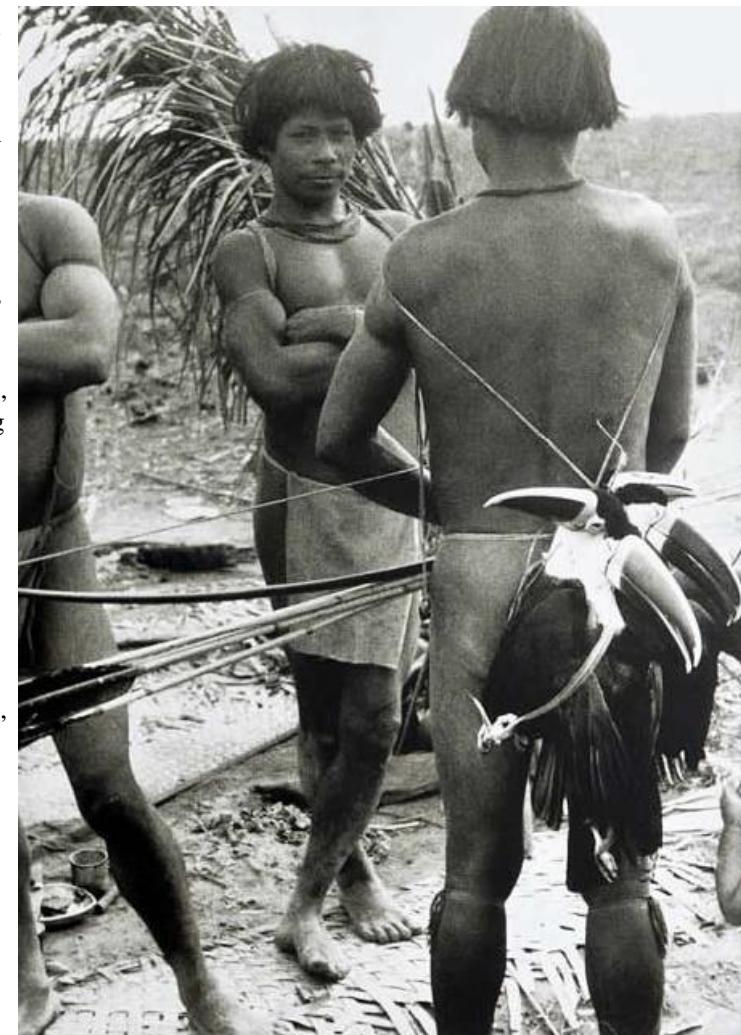
I cannot speak for all of eco-extremism, only myself, and I will accept other viewpoints of the tendency if correction is needed, but from this, I can state that anarchism, primitivism, leftism etc. are wrong-headed and moralistic precisely because they try to organize / judge / improve on society, whereas human animals cannot possibly do this, not with any competence at least. Many of these societies have barbarous, violent, and "unenlightened" practices but have been around for hundreds if not thousands of years. Why is it that our own life-span in an exceptionally young (if powerful) society gives us the right to determine how human society should be in EVERY circumstance? I would argue that it doesn't. Societies that evolved within their environments from time immemorial have proven that they can sustain their way of life over millennia. Our own society (that is, the one we are stuck in, though not willingly) cannot make the same claim, quite the contrary.

Personally, this view is why I cannot take anarchism, Marxism, leftism, liberalism, etc. seriously as means by which to interpret reality. These ideologies obsess over accidental things, namely, social organization, equality among individuals, division of labor, etc. In our animal reality, that is like choosing something to eat based solely on its color, rather than on its taste and how nourishing it is. The main relationship is not that of human beings between themselves, but of human beings to nature, or rather, their natural surroundings and the other entities, sentient or not, that they share them with. All of these flawed and civilized ideologies, even self-proclaimed "primitivism", are humanist and anthropocentric, while we want only a relationship with Wild Nature and the cultures that it has formed over millennia like drops of water can form stone, unconsciously, organically, and unplanned.

Humans no doubt have a role to play in that, and their actions do shape the landscape and themselves, just as the actions of beavers, ants, birds, etc. shape a forest or a river. But that is completely determined by the incarnation of Wild Nature that they encounter, it takes place over centuries, and it is by no means "planned" or "controlled" by a determining human intellect. It merely happens. Present a "savage" with the idea that selective burning of brush or similar activities make him the master of the landscape, he would more than likely be puzzled by such a claim.

Here I would then state that humans in the past always struck a balance between their own power and mind and that of Wild Nature itself. The point is not that some lived in complete harmony with nature, without hierarchy or war or anything that offends Western bourgeois sensibilities. The point is that the balance of power between the human and Wild Nature was maintained. In some cases, that would entail patriarchy, in some places that would not be the case (Were the Selk'nam of Tierra del Fuego "more domesticated" than other hunter-gatherers because they were ruled by a patriarchy? Considering their culture, that would be an absurdity to state.) Were the Choctaw of what is now the southeastern United States as civilized as the Aztecs or Maya simply because they also grew corn? Were the Yuroks of northern California somehow evil because they had a rigid social hierarchy but no agriculture?

"Domestication" and "civilization" then may not be as clear-cut categories as some other anti-civilization ideologies claim that they are. This is because our knowledge is animal and thus flawed. Here we must look at things not in black and white but on a spectrum, and in this spectrum, we are not judging human societies by how "nice" they were and how well they treated women, gays, the disabled, etc. We don't care about those things, and those who obsess over them are extremely stupid and let their own civilized prejudices get the better of them. We would rather trust societies that lived for thousands of years in their respective environments and their "values" than the values of humanistic Westerners who hide the violence of modern techno-industrial society behind platitudes of morality and decency.



The most important thing about domestication and civilization, then, is that they arise but they have been in most places quite fragile. That is, they have never been able to dominate completely, they have never exalted individual human societies into complete dominance over nature, and when they have, collapse inevitably occurred. What we have now is a complete monstrosity, a Leviathan that cannot collapse without possibly taking most living things with it, something that seeks complete domination. Before this unnatural being, the only attitude we can have is complete and utter hostility.

These may appear to be completely scholastic reflections, and perhaps they are. At the very least, I write and record them to support the eco-extremist claim that liberal Western values absolutely do not matter, and thus when people try to shove them in our face, we should reject them energetically and insult those who still buy into those fairy tales. Also, it is to indicate that eco-extremist pessimism is all the more warranted: if all we have going for us in terms of “hope” are the incomplete observations of anthropologists and our own flawed intellectual powers, it is clear that we are completely screwed.



We cannot make societies from scratch overnight, and nor should we have to. A possum does not ask itself nor is it qualified to determine what it means to be a possum. It merely is a possum. In other words, it doesn't seek to be a god, and neither should we. In the past, humans lived in societies that existed for thousands of years that also told them what it was like to be human; societies that were small, sustainable, and more often than not, very stable. That we do not have this and instead think that we can play the part of social engineer is the real foundational problem. That we are tempted to think that a !Kung Bushman is more “wild” or “better” than a Selk’nam hunter, or a Choctaw warrior, or a Yurok “noble” is not an indication of knowledge, but of foolishness.

The primary relationship in eco-extremism is between the human animal and Wild Nature as embodied in his immediate environment, and not with some abstraction known as humanity. It is thus an inhumanist and not humanist tendency. Just as all bears do not have solidarity with bear-kind, but rather depend on all of the surrounding plants, animals, waters, and rocks to survive, thus all humans should not have solidarity with all humankind, but only with those of similar disposition and with the beings who they have come to love in their surroundings. That should go without saying, and many savages have that attitude. Also, we realize that civilization is a “transient sickness”, one that emerges at times and goes away, sometimes leaving scars, but never terminal, as the Whole can never be destroyed by the Part. That we are deficient in this regard, that we don’t really know our places, or have been robbed of them, indicates the tragedy of our state, and our rage in the indiscriminate war against those who would destroy and enslave Wildness. Even if the only Wild Nature we have left is ourselves, or perhaps only the pain and anger of having been deprived of it, that is enough to carry on this war against domesticated humanity.

**-Chahta-Ima**  
**Nanih Waiya**  
**Spring 2016**

# Collateral damage: An Eco-Extremist Defense of Indiscriminate Violence



Merely being an eco-extremist propagandist, I am forced to pay attention to reactions of anarchist and leftist readers to the actions of ITS and other eco-extremist groups. The first reaction I encounter is usually one of disgust. How can eco-extremists carry out indiscriminate acts against property and people, such as burning buses and sending mail-bombs, where “innocent bystanders” may also get hurt? What if a child was near a bomb, or what if the secretary to the scientist, a mother and a wife, opens the package and gets killed instead? Why this obsession with nihilistic violence, where innocent people get killed? Isn’t this ineffective for helping to destroy civilization? Doesn’t this just show that the eco-extremists are mentally disturbed, probably angry at their parents, off their medications, outcasts, etc.?

Really, the opposition of leftists, anarchists, anarcho-primitivists, and any number of people who react negatively to eco-extremist violence is one of great hypocrisy: hypocrisy of the level that Nietzsche and any good manipulator of words could easily dissect. For civilization, and any ideology really, is based on indiscriminate violence, on hiding dirty laundry and sweeping dirt under the rhetorical rug so no one can see it.

Let’s start with the numbers game:

Opposition to eco-extremist violence can be approached from the view of the Christian “Golden Rule”: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” You wouldn’t want to be blown up on a bus. You would not want to have your fingers blown off, or have a bullet put in your head when you are just “doing your job”. Everyone has the right to work and support themselves, right? But your chances of being on the business end of an eco-extremist blast are minuscule: you probably have a better chance of winning the lottery. On the other hand, your chances of crashing your car, or being hit by one, are astronomically higher by comparison. Your chances of dying early of cancer or heart disease due to the consumption of processed foods are even higher. Yet those two last causes of death are “perfectly natural”, while being “collateral damage” in a war to defend nature itself is somehow a tragedy. Cry me a river.

Of course, what such condemnation means is a tacit approval of state or civilized violence. For the bourgeois liberal, “terrorist violence” is horrible because only the State can designate people who need to be killed (if you lived in Afghanistan or Yemen, for example, you would have more to fear than just cars; you would also have drones raining down death on you from the skies. But

that's okay, because U.S. democracy approved this.) The leftist and anarchist can criticize eco-extremist action with more integrity, so the reasoning goes, because they too reject the violence of capitalism and the State. Aside from that, however, they create a fantasy world where "the guilty", rich parasites who they have tried and sentenced to death in their own minds from the comforts of their talk-shops, are killed indiscriminately and even with cruelty, not taking into account that the bourgeoisie too are also husbands, fathers, sons, daughters, etc. And of course, they expect that violence to be minimal, as Revolutions have historically been dainty tea parties where the innocent never, ever get hurt...

What we are confronting here is the Great Hologram of Civilization: one that compels us to care about people we never will meet, to have deep empathy for the abstract citizen, comrade, or child of God. We are supposed to get upset at the sight of the burning bus, or the destroyed office, or the leftovers of an incendiary device left outside of a government building. We are supposed to go over scenarios in our head: "What if my daughter was in front of that building? What if my wife was in that office? What if I was that scientist lying in a pool of my own blood in a parking lot?" Well, what if you were? And to be honest, you weren't, so why are you playing that film in your head?

Isn't that the great narrative of civilization: we are all in this together? That's a lie, because we aren't. Your life is merely a cog in a great Machine, and should the Machine decide to spit you out, you will be spit out. You have no agency, your morality is an illusion. It just covers up a lot of violence and death that went into making the clothes on your back and the food you eat. It's alright for massive numbers of animals to die, to burn down forests and pave over meadows. It's okay to enslave people in factories, to erect monuments to those who buried the worlds of wild savages, to sacrifice the dreams and sanity of those alive today for a better tomorrow. But for the love of God, don't place a pipe bomb in front of a government ministry! That's going too far.

Here's the key to your liberation: you owe society nothing, and you don't have to do what it says. Those people who get killed on the other side of the world don't care about you, and they never will. You are just one digit too many in their Dunbar's number: at most you will be a headline and then you will be forgotten. Your identifying with the death of the "citizen" or "child of God" hundreds and thousands of miles away is a way to manipulate you into doing what society wants: it's a tool of domestication, and that's it.

The poet Robinson Jeffers once stated that cruelty was the most natural thing, yet civilized man makes it out to be contrary to nature. Some tribes in what is now northern California were observed by the Europeans to be the most peaceful and the most violent at the same time: peaceful in that they had no organized warfare, violent because that's how they settled inter-personal disputes. Those who cower in disgust at individualist acts of violence are really defending the right of the State and civilization to have exclusive power of life and death over civilized human animals.

They're its property, so how dare those eco-terrorists impinge on that right, as well as the right of 10,000 years of civilized law and order to decide who lives or who dies!

**I end my rant with two (apocryphal?) quotes from Joseph Stalin. The first is: "You have to break a few eggs to make an omelette." Of course, that is what the opponents of eco-extremists will always say: we are sacrificing the lives of innocent people to make our own version of Eden. Anyone with half a brain and a little reading comprehension will know that's bullshit.**

**Eco-extremism doesn't seek to break eggs to make an omelette: it seeks to destroy the whole farm, and if eggs get damaged in the process, that's just the nature of the beast. How many eggs get broken on a factory farm a day?**

**The second quote from Stalin is: "One death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic." And is this not the logic of civilization, of the leftist and anarchist? They can shrug off a whole world being butchered by civilization, they can wave off the deaths of savage peoples who did nothing but defend their land, and they can play video games in their heads of strangling capitalists in their beds, but when they see a bus on fire, or a lab blown up, they scream, "Won't somebody think of the children!?"**

You may think these acts are ineffective; you may think them the obsessions of crazy sociopaths, or what have you. We're not trying to change the world, we would rather see it all go up in flames. And if you don't see that the destruction of the Earth, of the rivers and mountains, of the forests and oceans, is the real insanity, then we cannot help you, nor would we care to. Just duck when you see us coming.

**By: Chahta-Ima**

# Lessons from the Yahi War

I have meandered from the original point of this essay but I have done so purposefully. The intention has been to let Ishi and the Yahi, the last wild tribe in North America, speak for themselves, instead of engaging in simple polemics where sloppy sloganizing replaces real in-depth attention to a subject. What is clear is that the Yahi did not wage war as Christians or liberal humanists. They slaughtered men, women, and children. They stole, they attacked in secret, and they fled into the shadows after their attacks. They were not well-liked even by their fellow Indians, those who should have been just as hostile to civilization as they were. And the prospect of certain defeat did not stop them from escalating their attacks until there were few of them left. Once that point was reached, they literally held out to the last man. In that, eco-extremism shares or at least aspires to many of these same qualities.

The Yahi were a perfect example of what the eco-extremist seeks as outlined in the editorial of *Regresión*:

*"Austerity: This decadent society makes us want stuff that we don't need, though some refuse to see this and are enslaved by the endless pursuit of more trinkets. The majority of people are trying to keep up with the Joneses, they dream of making it big, of having the latest gadgets and comforts, etc. For us, all of that is an abomination. Simplicity: making do with what you have and rejecting civilized vices regarding coveting unnecessary things. These are well-known traits of the ecoextremist individualist."*

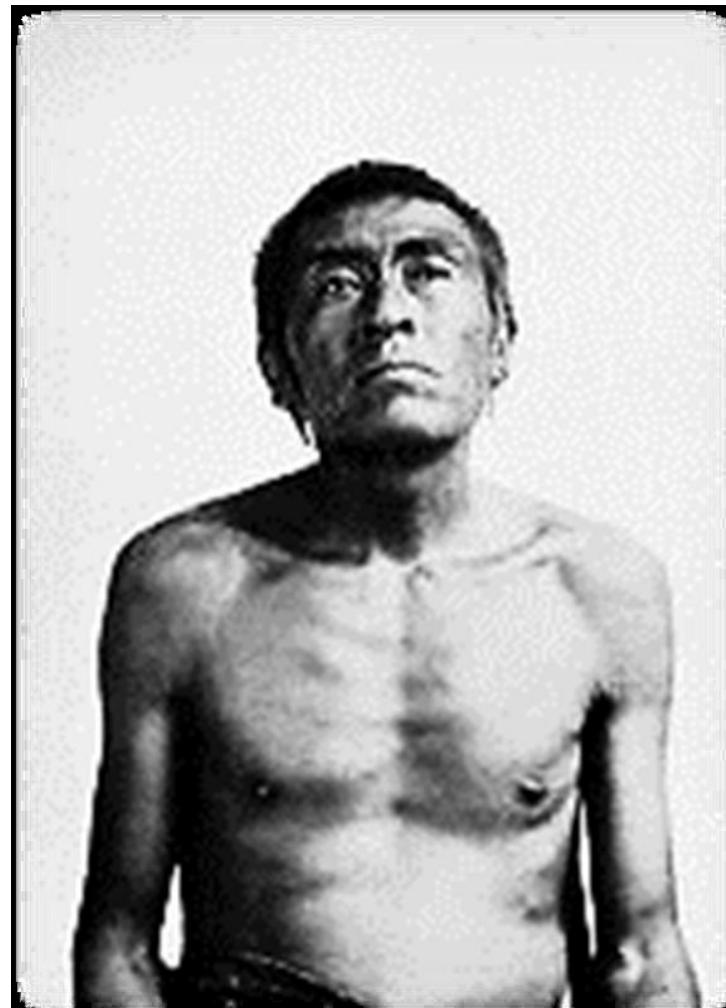
The Yahi, like many of the Chichimeca tribes of what is now Mexico, lived in "inhospitable" hill country at odds with their more affluent and numerous neighbors in the lowlands; this was the case even prior to the arrival of the Europeans. These neighbors, notably the Maidu, did not fight back against civilization because their relatively affluent life made them more conducive to accepting the civilized way of life. Unlike the Mesoamerican kingdoms, the Maidu did not know agriculture, but they were nonetheless already "domesticated" on one level.

It was the harsh and Spartan culture of the Yahi that strengthened their opposition to the Europeans, even when the latter showed superior power, even when it was clear that it was a war of extermination that they would likely lose. They redoubled their efforts and fought their own war of extermination to the best of their ability, sparing neither women nor children. Through cunning, guile, and a superior knowledge of the landscape, they waged a campaign of terror on the whites, a campaign that confounded all who studied the indigenous tribes of the region. Even other Indians feared them (just as other people who say they oppose civilization excommunicate the eco-extremists) as they did not divide the world into neat dichotomies of Indians vs. whites. To them, those who were not with them were their enemies and were treated as such.

The Yahi's war was thus indiscriminate and "suicidal", just as the eco-extremist struggle aims to be. "Indiscriminate" in the sense that it is not driven by humanistic or Christian considerations. It didn't take into consideration who may have been "innocent" or "guilty": it attacked all non-Yahi, all who had surrendered to the genocidal ways of the white man. The Yahi weren't aiming to make friends with other tribes: even when Ishi enters civilization, he refuses to associate with the Indians of his region who surrendered so easily to white civilization. To preserve his dignity, he preferred to stay with his conqueror rather than with the conquered. The Yahi war was "suicidal" in that it took no consideration of the future: it aimed to live free in the here and now, and to attack those who were attacking them, without weighing the cost. That is because their way of life was forged on the margins on hostile lands, and much of their dignity centered on attack on those who they considered soft and inauthentic. There was no future for the

Yahi in civilization because there was no room for compromise with civilization.

Here I will speculate (purely based on my own opinion) as to why someone would adopt eco-extremist views in our context. Of course, there is much anger, perhaps even rage, involved. I imagine that there would need to be to carry out these actions.



However, what does the eco-extremist love? Modern humans are so alienated from Wild Nature, so callous to a way of life where they don't depend on civilization for their every need, that they lament someone being wounded by an exploding envelope, yet shrug off, or even endorse, the destruction of a forest or a lake or a river for the benefit of civilized mankind. They're so numb to their own nature that they think that Nature itself is a product of their own ingenuity, that trees only fall in the forest so that they can hear them, and that the sine qua non of life on Earth is the continued existence of eight billion hungrier and ever greedier people. If anyone is blinded by hate, it is the humanist, the leftist, and the apologist for "law and order" who makes their own existence the non-negotiable condition for the continuity of life on Earth. If given the choice between the destruction of the planet and their own beloved abstraction called, "humanity", they would rather destroy the world than see humanity fail.

What is even sorrier is that most civilized humans won't even be thankful for the noble sentiments of the anarchist and the leftist.

To them they will just be snot-nosed bomb throwing punks who should chill out, go to the football game, and stop bothering others with their politics or solidarity. The leftist / anarchist has Stockholm syndrome for masses who will never listen to them, let alone allow them to win them over. They want to be seen in a good light by society, even though society will never pay them any heed, let alone like them. They refuse to see society as the enemy, and that's why they'll perish along with it, not knowing why the dream of the Enlightenment failed, why all men will never be brothers, why the only thing in which civilized humans are equal is in their complicity in the destruction of Wild Nature. They aim to be the star pupils of civilization but will always remain the miscreants, the outsiders, the dirty anarchists who need to get a job.

Eco-extremism will grow because people know that this is the endgame. Indeed, from Muslims to Christians to all sorts of other ideologies, apocalypse is in the air, and nothing can stop it. That's because civilization is a death wish, and always has been. It knows that man cannot be dominated, that the only way to make him submissive is to turn him into a machine, to mechanize his wants and needs, and to remove him further and further from the chaos within himself that is Wild Nature. In this sense, the spirit of Ishi and the Yahi remains, it will always resurface when you least expect it, as a tendency and not as a doctrine, as a cry that fights today without fear for tomorrow. Eco-extremism will have no end because it is the savage attack, the "natural disaster", the desire to let the fire burn and to dance around it. The anarchist recoils and the leftist fears, because they know that they can't defeat it. It will continue, and consume everything. It will burn up utopias and the dreams of civilized futures and leave only Nature in its place. For the eco-extremist, that is a cause of rejoicing and not of horror.

**-Chahta-Ima**

NanihWaiya, Spring 2016



# Lessons from the Calusa

Widmer, in his book-length dissertation on the Calusa, describes the following general principles behind the behavior of living organisms in relation to their environment:

Still, because these subsistence strategies tend to maximize their net yield, this behavior can be theoretically understood, using other general behavioral and ecological models for analyzing feeding strategy or other aspects of adaptation. Since human populations articulate with an environment, just as other species do, theoretical principles which have been developed from ecological studies of other animals can have direct applicability to human populations as well, particularly as they relate to increased energy capture and efficiency. For example, Pianka (1974), in a discussion of evolutionary ecology, shows how an animal will adapt its feeding strategy to the structure of its environment to maximize the capture of energy and resources necessary to its survival. (16)

The author Jon Young, in the book, *What the Robin Knows: How Birds Reveal the Secrets of the Natural World*, describes the same principle in another context:

At all times, baseline conserves energy, because conservation of energy is a major priority of all animals, but especially for birds, almost all of whom run on a very lean energy budget. (A chickadee startled from its roost on a very cold night in the dead of winter loses the vital heat trapped in its feathers. This bird may well die by dawn.)... First imagine trying to feed your own hungry self off a landscape. Have you ever tried this? Now imagine feeding five starving teenagers off the landscape, and you'll know why birds conserve energy, particularly when they're also singing to mark their territories. Conservation of energy is why the ground bird that knows that a particular cat can jump only four feet off the ground will ascend to a branch five feet up, but not fifty feet or even fifteen feet, which would be a waste of energy. (9)

Here we can analyze the Calusa adaptation to the southern Florida environment as animals and not as “rational political actors” with the benefit of foresight on issues such as personal autonomy and hierarchy. In summary of what we wrote above, the Calusa were one of the last in a long line of shore dwellers who had inhabited the southwest Florida coast for thousands of years, becoming increasingly sedentary due to the exploitation of abundant fisheries where food was available year round. Due to a continuous cycle of plentiful and less plentiful years, and possibly due to interactions with complex Mississippian societies to the north, they became themselves a paramount chiefdom dominating adjacent tribes, all without radically altering their hunter-gatherer-fisher lifestyle. They knew of agriculture but never adopted it due to geographic and cultural factors. Such a cultural evolution also gave birth to a complex culture and theology wherein the fate of the cosmos was a reflection of the well-being of the polity, though their gods took the form of various fauna around them. They maintained their shifty ways and had such “hunter-gatherer” characteristics as refusing to discipline their children and not seeing themselves as different from the other animals with which they shared their environment. This was at least the ideological reason why the Spanish friars could not convert them: they were undomesticated and undomesticatable in the Spanish eyes, yet they remained warlike and rigidly hierarchical.

In this sense, we see the Calusa as a *sui generis* people formed by the unique environment of south Florida. We may even go out on a limb and state that they were the product of their gods and their vision of the spirit world, of their dead who told them to kill the Christian intruders. It is a shame that they fell so shockingly short of the fully nomadic, immediate returns hunter-gatherer paradigm that is the apex of anarcho-primitivist sanctity, but we would hope that the priests of that ideology find it in their hearts to forgive them of their mortal sins of hierarchy and authority...

All jesting aside, we return here then to the accusation that we leveled at the beginning of the essay, namely, that anarcho-primitivists of the Zerzan / Tucker school are anthropocentric and rationalist. In their treatment of the social engineering of human societies, the best description of their overall attitude comes, appropriately enough, from the writings of Karl Marx, and specifically his magnum opus, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*:

A spider conducts operations which resemble those of a weaver, and a bee would put many a human architect to shame by the construction of its honeycomb cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax. At the end of every labour process, a result emerges which had already been conceived by the worker at the beginning, hence it already existed ideally. Man not only effects change of form in materials of nature; he also realizes his own purpose in those materials. And this is a purpose he is conscious of, it determines his mode of activity with the rigidity of a law, and he must subordinate his will to it. (284)

In his more philosophical musing of his youth, specifically, the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx is even more concise and specific, couching the same point in Hegelian language:

Man is a species-being, not only because he practically and theoretically makes the species – both his own and those of other things – his object, but also – and this is simply another way of saying the same thing – because he looks upon himself as the present, living species, because he looks upon himself as a universal and therefore free being.

Unlike the Calusa divines, and more like Marx, then, the “re-wilding” anarcho-primitivist bestows upon domesticated humans

raised in civilization the divine power to know what can constitute a perfectly egalitarian society, as well as the power of will to accomplish such a plan (though with much effort, and only seemingly for the predestined few, certainly). As their slogan goes, “We have seen the world that we want to live in and we will fight for it.” Human nature and the shape of any given human society are entirely transparent and static; they exist in our heart of hearts if only we purge domesticated thinking, renounce the right things, and run off to a little corner of Alaska or similar wilderness to carry it out in peace and tranquility. Of course, civilization will come intruding, which is why we must form “communities of resistance” which can respond appropriately. None of this, mind you, has anything to do with the imperceptible adaptations of peoples over thousands of years in particular environments, ones which created a myriad of adaptations which lasted for centuries with varying degrees of success. No, true human nature has all been scientifically distilled into Absolute Knowledge available in freshman-level anthropology textbooks, to be realized by those with the appropriate ambition and gumption to “tough it out” in hostile environments.

To say then that man is “an animal”, tossed about by the hands of fate like any other, is “despair”. It’s “nihilism” to think that, like the numerous other animals going extinct, we can’t save ourselves. It is *verboten* to suspect that, just as modern technological civilization buried hundreds if not thousands of other societies, with their own visions of the cosmos, man, and community, perhaps our own society won’t last much longer. Anarcho-primitivism is man deified because it envisions modern human creating a society like they’re standing in a buffet line, picking and choosing the qualities that most appeal to them (egalitarianism, mobility, personal autonomy, gender parity etc.) and leaving the rest. Never mind that no other animal has this luxury (and neither do humans, but don’t tell them that.) Along with the ancient Roman priests, the anarcho-primitivist utters, *Quod licet Iovi non licet bovi*. [What is permissible for Jove is not permissible for the ox.]

In contrast, eco-extremist pessimism is only pessimism for civilized humanity. The Whole of living and non-living beings on Earth will continue in one form or another. The forces (or gods or whatever you want to call them) that created societies like a multiplicity of flowers in a meadow will continue on; they will create new things and destroy them again. Eco-extremists are a weak force in that nature, but a force all the same. War and revenge are natural responses, especially when faced with the hostility, ugliness, and falsehood of civilized life. These were the same responses of the Teochichimecas, the Selk’nam, the Yahi, and yes, the “civilized” Calusa. Eco-extremists may continue to draw their inspiration mostly from warlike nomadic hunter-gatherers, but I would speculate that, given the choice between a Calusa “king” obedient to his gods and nature, and a humanist green anarchist playing social engineer, they would choose the former as an ally, even if this is a purely academic exercise.

What is the eco-extremist in the light of these reflections? He is also a product of his environment, of the city that is the tomb of forests, swamps, plains, and wetlands; of modern knowledge which has collected all previous forms of knowledge like dead animals in a taxidermy collection; of a society where everything is bought and sold to the highest bidder. If he has no gods to speak of, it is because the modern human being is, as Jacques Camatte wrote, “dead” and a “ritual of capital,” an afterthought of money creating more money, destroying more of the Earth, and enslaving every free moment of our modern lives. He is cut off from the mountains and rivers that can speak to him, the swamps where he can take refuge, the creatures that can be his totems, his inspiration, and his defenders. It is no surprise, then, that his only gods become rage and revenge, the spirits of an almost blind lashing out. What other reaction is possible? To echo the Italian nihilists’ citation of a criminal thug: “The only God I believe in is a loaded pistol with a hair trigger.”

That doesn’t seem very fair, and it probably isn’t, but the “gods” aren’t fair. We did not choose to be born into a total war of civilization against the last vestiges of Wild Nature, but here we are. Not everyone can be born into a time of peace, stasis, and tranquility; where the solutions to one’s problems are obvious and easy to carry out. No, that isn’t the time we live in, and it is delusional to think that “running away” and “living to fight another day” are options. “Another day” is now, and our backs are against the wall with nowhere to run. It’s not fair that the little nature that we have is being stripped from us before our eyes, and those who are long dead had it in abundance, but as the Crucified once uttered:

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. (Matthew 3:12)

—“*Halputta Hadjo*”

New moon of hvyuce (July), 2,016th year of the Crucified



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